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ABSTRACT

Issues in transforming educational policy into practice are examined in this report, with a focus on the implementation of school-based decision making (SBDM). The importance of understanding change as a process is underscored in the introduction. The first section offers a definition of and the rationale for school-based decision making and provides examples of innovative programs. The second section presents a review of school-based decision making and the research on educational change. Four major areas of the research on change include potential users' perceptions, participants' concerns, the principal's role, and patterns of change. The third section examines four issues faced by people responsible for SBDM--time, professional development, formation of an adoption strategy, and support for change. A conclusion is that the rate of the change process is affected by participants' perceptions, their movement through documented stages of concern, and the adopting principal's facilitator style. Successful change, however, often results in diverse patterns of innovation among schools. (39 references) (LMI)

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POLICY ISSUES

Changing Policy Into Practice: School-Based Decisionmaking

by **Gene Hall**
and
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University of Northern Colorado

November 1991

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Legislators are voting to change the way schools function and are challenging educators to make those changes work. With some changes, such as school-based decisionmaking, these challenges are not limited to the content and process of schooling but expand to the structure of schooling as well.

The frequency and magnitude of changes in recent years have sometimes created a high level of frustration between policymakers and educators. Educators face school improvement mandates that, they believe, prevent them from taking the very steps necessary for improvement, while policymakers complain that educators are not adopting mandates fast enough to cause schools to improve. The frequent result is more mandates, which produce gridlock--rules and regulations that block the implementation of each other--and passive resistance--by educators who feel too powerless to act. To eliminate this frustration and inaction, policymakers and educators need to take time to understand each other and to learn more about how the change process works.

While policymakers--developers of state policies--and educators--implementors of state policies--share many similarities, they function in very different environments. It is important for each to recognize that change is a process, not an event (Hall, Wallace, & Dossett, 1973; Fullan, 1982; Hall & Hord, 1987).

Understanding the Change Process

Research on the change process tells us that (a) people experience predictable stages as they adopt innovations, and (b) universal concepts and principles can guide the development of strategies for implementing innovations. One such innovation is school-based decisionmaking, a basic change in existing structures that entails a "renorming" of the interpersonal interactions among the adults associated with the school. The roles and responsibilities of the adults change. Further, the adults typically have had little experience with school-based decisionmaking. Taking a close look at the research on the change process can help us understand how educators might adopt this innovation at the school site. Specifically, we will look at four major areas of the research on change: perceptions, participant concerns, principals, and patterns of change.

People's perceptions. People naturally have perceptions about an innovation and its possible implications (Rogers & Shoemaker, 1971). If the innovation is perceived to have an advantage over the current practice, it will be adopted more quickly. If an innovation is perceived to be compatible with the current values of the adopter, it will be adopted more quickly. If the innovation is perceived as complex, it will be adopted more slowly, if at all. If the innovation is perceived as one that can be tested in "bite-size" pieces, and the first taste is satisfactory, the rest of the innovation will be accepted more readily. And, finally, if the innovation is perceived to have produced observable positive effects elsewhere, it will be adopted more quickly.

This spells trouble for school-based decisionmaking. For example, we can predict that many administrators will not see an advantage over existing practices. Instead, they may perceive a number of disadvantages, including a decrease in their authority and an increase in the time they devote to decisionmaking. School staffs may not view school-based decisionmaking as compatible with current practices, routines, and procedures for decisionmaking. Many may see school-based decisionmaking as complex; it adds new duties and more responsibilities for adopters. Although some components of school-based decisionmaking can be sampled, policy mandates rarely provide that latitude. Finally, adopters have been hard-pressed to find sites where they could observe school-based decisionmaking in action or see its positive effects, although this may be changing rapidly.

Those responsible for implementing school-based decisionmaking can be aware of the effects of people's perceptions. Implementation can be approached in ways that minimize problems and increase the chances of success.

Participant concerns. More than 20 years of research document the effects of change implementation on adopters of innovations. Hall and his colleagues (Hall, Wallace, & Dossett, 1973; Hall, George, & Rutherford, 1979; Hall & Hord, 1987) have studied the concerns of teachers and others and have developed a conceptual framework known as the Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM). The model, used worldwide to aid in the adoption of innovations, describes seven different Stages of Concern that adopters experience as part of the change process. Before

implementation, concerns tend to be Unrelated (Stage 0, Awareness); no concerns about the innovation are evident.

As possible use of the innovation becames real in the minds of adopters, they have more intense Self concerns (Stage 1, Informational; and Stage 2, Personal). Their concerns focus on the implications of the innovation for their own performance. For example, they ask: Am I capable of doing it? What will the principal say and do? What current practices will I have to eliminate?

As use of the innovation begins, Task concerns (Stage 3, Management) are more intense. People's thoughts, motivations, and preoccupations deal with concerns about the time, materials, and procedures it takes to use the innovation.

Only when the Self and Task concerns are resolved do adopters express Impact concerns (Stage 4, Consequence; Stage 5, Collaboration; and Stage 6, Refocusing). For example, they ask: How will the use of this innovation affect students and the school as a whole? How will it improve my effectiveness? How can I work with other faculty to use this innovation?

For the change process to be successfully completed, these different Stages of Concern will need to be recognized, addressed, resolved. That calls for ongoing support, formal training, staff development experiences, and coaching--essential staff development processes as outlined by Joyce and Showers (1980).

Since school-based decisionmaking requires a fundamental change in the roles and relationship of people involved with schools, the Stages of

Concern are likely to affect teachers, principals, district office personnel, community members, and others whose work is touched by this innovation. Without ongoing staff development and other forms of assistance that address the concerns of all these groups, the implementation of school-based decisionmaking is likely to be fraught with problems.

Principal's role. Although principals experience their own Stages of Concern, they are called upon to address the concerns of their faculty and facilitate the implementation of innovations. How well they address teacher concerns, work with those inside and outside the school, and develop a shared vision that guides day-to-day actions and decisions is a critical key to the success of the implementation.

Researchers have identified three different principal facilitator styles--Initiator, Manager, and Responder--that show a clear and consistent relationship to teacher success in adopting an innovation (Thomas, 1978; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982; Hall, Rutherford, Hord, & Huling-Austin, 1984; Schiller, 1988). Teachers are more successful in schools where principals are facilitating change with the Initiator style. In schools with Manager-style leadership, teachers are successful but not as successful as in schools with the Initiator style. Teachers in schools with principals who operate in the Responder style of leadership are not nearly as successful at implementing innovations.

A study that compared the degree of implementation of school-based decisionmaking in three schools found that the school with the stronger (Initiator-style) principal was most successful (Bridges, 1990). School-based

decisionmaking was more subtle, more complex, and practiced more often. Interestingly, teachers expressed less interest in going through the official procedures for becoming a school-based decisionmaking school. These teachers felt they already were a part of the decisionmaking process and that the school was moving in the appropriate direction.

In contrast, teachers in the Responder-led school showed interest in having a greater say in how the school was run. But the resulting school-based decisionmaking configuration was less rich and less directed to outcomes for students.

Patterns of change. The variety of states, policies, districts, schools, and individuals associated with education results in different mental images and definitions of an innovation (Hall & Hord, 1987; Hall & Loucks, 1978; Marsh, 1990; Marsh & Odden, 1991). Further, differences in staff, facilitator-style of the principal, and perceptions of participants result in a variety of configurations for the same innovation from one school to another or from one classroom to another. In some schools, those configurations are not consistent with what the original architects had imagined. In others, the innovation is not implemented at all.

When policymakers look to see whether the innovation has produced the desired results, they often are disappointed to find reports that show no significant differences. Most policymakers have a nearly explicit expectation that, of course, all school teachers and principals will do exactly as imagined. Yet, implementors find that making someone else's dream into an operational reality in one school or classroom is

not easy. Assessing the various innovations--through an Innovation Configuration Checklist or other scale--is one way that implementors can understand and facilitate the change process (Hall & Loucks, 1978; Heck, Stiegelbauer, Hall, & Loucks, 1981).

Policy Implications of Change

Few studies have been conducted to identify the effectiveness of school councils, the perceptions of the participants, or the quality and scope of the decisions that school councils make. What is the ideal number of members or representative groups that should compose a school council? How often should the school council meet? What is the nature of the decisions that school councils make? What is the purpose of school councils? For some, the purpose is decentralization. For others, it's empowerment. What is known is this: Implementation of school-based decisionmaking requires continuing responsibilities for policymakers, creates new burdens for local school people, and alters the roles of district and regional office personnel. Further, the research identifies four issues typically faced by those who are responsible for complex innovation in schools. Those issues involve time, people, strategies for implementation, and support.

Time. The research on change suggests that it takes time--three to five years--for real change to occur. To expect structural and procedural change in less time is unrealistic. With school-based decisionmaking, for example, local school councils need time to struggle to identify the new roles and functions of their members; early decisionmaking attempts are slow and awkward. In addition, school-based

decisionmaking activities take time out of each working day. While study of school-based decisionmaking efforts is still in its early stages, researchers find that educators struggle with fitting these new responsibilities into their already busy lives (Brown, 1990). In many cases, the work of school councils tends to take on a rather thin veil of participation and effectiveness (Firestone & Corbett, 1988).

Professional development. Participants in school-based decisionmaking need to be prepared for their new roles. Teachers and administrators--accustomed to making decisions in isolation--need to learn to make decisions collaboratively. Both educators and local citizen representatives on school councils need support and assistance in learning how to perform their new tasks, as well as help in becoming comfortable with their new roles and responsibilities. These new skills develop slowly. For example, one nine-member school council spent four training days learning about the types of decisions members would be expected to make and how to make those decisions collaboratively (Everson, 1986).

Adoption strategy. Evidence on the adoption of innovations suggests that school-based decisionmaking will be most successful if implementation occurs in small steps--not with wholesale changes that are heretofore foreign to the organization. Further, implementation works best when schools analyze the needs of the organization and proceed to adopt and adapt selected processes that meet those local needs. School councils can assess their progress in developing their decisionmaking skills and add additional components when they believe they are ready.

Support. No school is an island, and implementing school-based decisionmaking reinforces that truism. If the culture outside the school does not change, those inside the school will find it difficult to take charge of decisionmaking. Outsiders can help by changing their traditional roles. District office personnel, school board members, and state policymakers will need to give up certain decisions, learn to tolerate school-based decisions, and be willing to accept diverse decisions from one school to another. Also, many of the operating rules and regulations will have to change. After all, all of the existing policies and procedures were established to maintain centralized decisionmaking.

Conclusions

Mandated change often leads to frustration between policymakers and educators when results are not forthcoming. Policymakers, district-level officials, and school-based personnel are called upon to recognize that change is a process not an event. The implementation of change--and especially of a complex education innovation like school-based decisionmaking--requires extra resources: time, dollars, staff development, and outside facilitating support. The process of change is speeded up or slowed down by the perceptions of those involved, the participants' movement through documented stages of concern, and the adopting principal's facilitator style. And, even yet, successful change can result in diverse patterns of the innovation from one school to another.

INTRODUCTION

The long-standing social contract between our citizens and our schools is undergoing a massive shift in trust. What the public expects from schools and how educators carry out their responsibilities are changing. Most educators are uncertain about what is happening, and if asked, many would express incredulity at the general lack of faith the public holds toward our schools.

The traditional paradigm, which held that schools are responsible for the education of youth, has experienced considerable erosion of faith, heretofore unknown (Dressler, 1976). As one might expect, the explanations are neither easy nor simple. One major response to this shift has been the engagement of policymakers in shaping the structures and processes of schooling.

In recent years, terms like reform, restructure, and reconceptualize have become common jargon in the lexicon of policymakers and educators. While the operational definitions of these terms are still somewhat obscure, many attempts have been legislated to create change in how schools function. Some states, such as California and Florida, have a 10-20 year history of annual legislative initiatives. This approach views school change as a series of successive approximations--learning from past-year initiatives feeds into having more informed initiatives in subsequent years. Other states, such as Colorado, have centered on three- and four-year plans for improving schools. With this strategy, a multi-year perspective is maintained; however, frequently this approach carries the implicit, and in some states explicit, statement that "this is a one time" happening. These legislators seem to expect that the

problems of schooling will not need continuing policy attention. A few states, such as Texas, have indeed relied upon a one-time omnibus education bill that is intended to fix all. The one-time-cure-all approach views school change as an event, where all will be resolved instantaneously because the date for change has been set in law. The multi-faceted, big-bill approach, whether in one year or over several, has an additional complexity in that many different changes (often unrelated to each other) must be implemented at once.

One, if not the most, ambitious initiative is the Kentucky Education Reform Act, passed in April 1990. The Kentucky act is the aftermath of a suit over unequal school finances that led the state supreme court to declare the entire Kentucky school system unconstitutional. The court turned to the legislature to develop a new system. To the credit of the political and educational leadership in Kentucky, an intensive and responsible development process was established that lead to the passage of a comprehensive reform act, which mandated changes in school governance, finance, and curriculum.

What is exemplified by the experiences in all of these states is that policymakers are challenging educators to do something. Policymakers are no longer willing to wait faithfully for educators to address the perceived deficiencies of our schools. Historically, policymakers have concerned themselves with the content and process of schooling. The Kentucky Education Reform Act underscores that policymakers are increasingly willing to involve themselves in the structure of schooling as well.

The purpose of this paper is not to scrutinize the specifics of any particular reform act. Rather, our purpose is to examine background issues related to implementing the requirements of education policy mandates. We focus our discussion on one aspect of education reform that is being adopted with increased frequency--school-based decisionmaking (SBDM). The implementation issues in SBDM become especially interesting since its adoption requires a much more complex and personal change for teachers and principals than do other changes in schools. With SBDM, we are talking about personal and specific changes in the role of adults and in the adult relationships within the school; changes that can be very threatening.

Our objective is to use recent policy-driven efforts to restructure schools and the research literature on change in schools to help educators and policymakers understand possible options and implications for implementing the change process at the school site. Our message is that change is a process, not an event (Hall, Wallace & Dossett, 1973; Fullan, 1982; Hall & Hord, 1987) and that creation of education policy is only one half step. Making the change real in a school (i.e., implementation) is the essential second half step.

THE PROBLEM

The problem of translating policy into practice can be examined in several ways. Regardless of which rationale is used, the underlying problem, as we see it, is the failure of both policymakers and educators to recognize that change is a process, not an event.

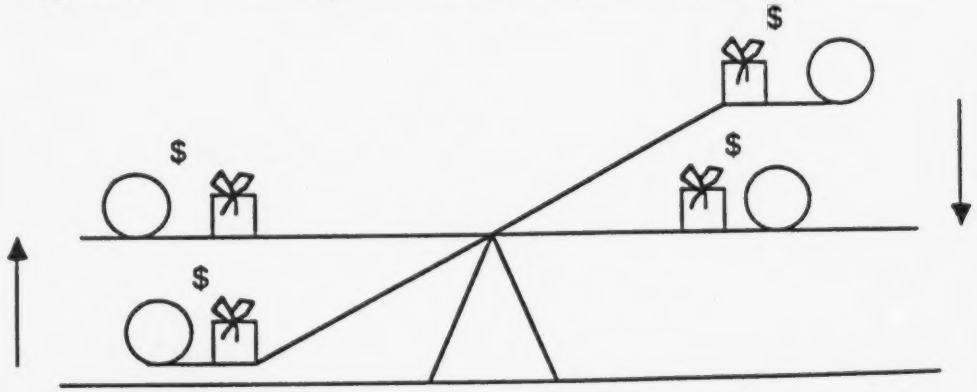
Their failure to understand this basic premise leads to increasing frustration for both role groups. Policy leaders mandate efforts to improve schooling and when improvement is not forthcoming, they see schools as being unresponsive. Their reaction is to adopt a new round of tighter, more rigid, more demanding policy mandates. At the same time, practitioners see themselves as being further and further restrained and constrained. Their reaction is frustration, cynicism, and an increasing unwillingness to respond to the next generation of policy mandates. The consequence for the American education system is (a) gridlock from the platform of corrective education policies, rules, and regulations; and (b) passive resistance by educators who are frustrated, disappointed, and powerless.

Policymakers and educators must understand that, for the others to do their work, both must move through a process. Perhaps Figure 1 will be useful in illustrating and describing some elements of the process for each party. The development of a policy mandate entails a process that requires time, money, ideas, and leadership expertise. On the other side, implementation of a policy mandate also requires time, money, ideas, and leadership expertise. It is at this point that the first failure can occur. Both parties frequently fail to recognize that, for the other, basic process requirements are necessary for them to do their part of the job.

A second point where failure can occur is in the lack of understanding, and in many cases appreciation, of the special characteristics required of the two players to accomplish the stated purpose. In addition, the process works in different ways for each.

Elements of these differences are highlighted as a part of Figure 1.

Figure 1 Change is a Process, Not an Event



Policy Development	Innovation Implementation
Visibility	No Glory
Simple Appearance	Time
Compromise	Technical Knowledge
Constituencies	Clinical Skill
Timing	Patience
Broad Perspective	Persistence

On the policy development side, many different requirements are necessary to turn an idea into an acceptable policy statement and to establish it as law. A new policy does not just materialize out of the air. Rather, a constituency must support the idea, and advocates must understand and work the legislative process. The idea must have a sufficient amount of visibility and attractiveness. It has to at least appear to be simple and to represent an approach that will work across the broad spectrum of people or agencies to be targeted. Further, successful policy establishment requires sensitivity and timing. The key to all of this in terms of the policy process is a spirit of compromise. What begins as a germ of an idea for a new policy frequently ends up looking quite

different by the time it is examined, talked about, studied, and packaged so that it will receive a majority vote. Unfortunately, the spirit of compromise and adaptation is not passed on to those who must implement it. During the past two decades, implementors of education policy mandates have been given increasingly rigid requirements that do not allow for adaptation or accommodation to local conditions.

On the other side of the equation is innovation implementation. School personnel receive policy mandates and are expected to change as directed, but the implementation of innovations is a process, too. Schools, teachers, and principals cannot simply change their color and shape by a specific date, without time to learn about and figure out how to make operational the intent of the policy. Implementation takes time, money, an effective idea, and leadership, just like policy development. However, the characteristics and the essential elements of implementation are different in tone and nature from those necessary for the development of policy. Some of these characteristics are highlighted in Figure 1 as well.

For example, little or no glory accompanies working two to three years in one school to bring about a basic change. To provide leadership for change within a school, the implementors in that school must stay close to home with their noses to the grindstone. Implementors must have a great deal of technical knowledge about the innovation and must know how it works. They have to be very skillful in coaching individual teachers and effective in working with the community to gain support and understanding for what the change is about. They have to have patience and persistence to support, cajole, and facilitate each individual

teacher within a school whose faculty is gradually moving towards becoming skilled and confident at doing things the new way.

In summary, as suggested in Figure 1, the two sides of the process are parallel in their elements of the equation. In both cases, time, money, resources, and specialized and skilled leadership are essential keys to success. In both cases, we are talking about a process. Two common failures in the process are the lack of recognition that the other side even moves through a process and that, within each side, the elements of making the process successful have unique and context-specific characteristics. The spirit of compromise talked about in the legislative process has its parallel on the implementation side when educators talk about coaching, offering systematic staff development, and team building. The role of leadership is key on both sides, too. Very few legislators have major authority over enough other legislators to get their way without question. On the other hand, very few principals are charismatic enough as leaders to get their way absolutely. Success on both sides of the equation requires working with others over time, with available resources and flexibility to develop an interpretation and agenda that will work.

We will return to this discussion and to a discussion of the keys to implementation success after an analysis of school-based decisionmaking--the particular aspect of reform that we're focusing on here. To understand issues of implementation, it is first necessary to have a better understanding of what the innovation is, can be, and is not.

DEFINITION OF SCHOOL-BASED DECISIONMAKING

As with any new concept in education, at the beginning terms are used loosely. It is not uncommon to hear the terms school-based management, school-based decisionmaking, and collaborative decisionmaking used interchangeably. At this time, no clear distinctions between these terms exist. For this paper, we subscribe to the spirit implied by school-based decisionmaking, where essential decisions are made at the school level by those with the greatest amount of knowledge about the particular phenomenon.

In many instances, the site will vary. In some schools, it will be at the building level. In others, it may be a department; and in others, the site may be the classroom. As you will see in the examples later in this paper, local school governing councils--set up to implement school-based decisionmaking--come in various forms. Some are composed of teachers, a principal, and local citizens, while others may be local citizens only. The forms that school councils take are, at this time, less important than are the functions they perform. Thus, it is difficult for us to stipulate one SBDM arrangement that is appropriate for all settings. Rather, two essential characteristics separate SBDM from the traditional paradigm of school management. The first distinction is a shift from top-down administration to some degree of shared decisionmaking, where decisions are made by those closest to the action. A second key distinction implied by SBDM is that more participants will be involved in making decisions, although the concept of SBDM in and of itself does not specify the areas or domains over which those at the site level will have decisionmaking authority.

One implication of the move toward SBDM is that the role of the principal will change dramatically--directive and chain-of-command authority will diminish. A second implication is that other participants (e.g., teachers) will need to take time away from their traditional role to learn about and participate in the decisionmaking process. Also, much more of the responsibility for leading schools will be shared by the building principal, his/her staff, and local citizens (Guthrie, 1986).

School personnel are moving uneasily into this era, where the concept of leadership is undergoing redefinition. Administrators who operate from more traditional models are struggling to understand exactly what their roles can be, and in some instances, are uncertain if their new responsibilities have credibility (Chapman & Boyd, 1987). Teachers are uncertain about their roles as well, and many resent the time spent out of their classrooms that shared decisionmaking requires.

Why School-Based Decisionmaking?

The answer to this question requires looking at the variety of pressures that have led to calls to decentralize power and authority. In addition to concerns about student achievement, drug use, single-parent families, and foreign competition, school districts are having increasing difficulty in gaining public approval for local school tax increases. Some attribute the lack of public financial support for schools to a new consumerism, wherein we expect direct and clear returns on our investments. Many hold that the schools are not producing, given their resources, and a sizable segment of the public is reticent to spend more on an ailing system.

It is not difficult to trace the lineage of the new consumerism. Our success as a nation has been based on performance, productivity, and successful competition. We search for the best buy for our money when we shop for goods and services in the commercial marketplace. Until now, this form of accountability has been reserved solely for the marketplace, but as the costs for social programs command a larger percentage of the public budget, we have slowly transferred this particular value to the arena of social services. Historically, accountability in schools meant how well the superintendent stayed within the budget approved by the local school board. Looking into the quality of the product, i.e., the achievement of the students, was heretofore never questioned. As the new consumerism viewpoint inquires into how tax dollars are spent, the doors to the school are opened in ways they have never been opened before. Many educators have not been prepared for such scrutiny, nor are they willing to acquiesce passively to what some see as the public's expectation for a measurable return on their investment in schools.

School finance has been the key vehicle to draw state legislators into the fray. A direct correlation exists between increased education policymaking at the state level and the shift in budgeting authority for financing schools to the state level. It is quite common now for more than 50 percent of the local school budget to come from the state level and for half of the state budget to be education related. Politicians' interests are drawn naturally to where the biggest parts of their budgets are assigned.

The notion that SBDM offers a renewal to the education enterprise also stems from changing conceptions of the school as a work place

(Rosenholtz, 1985). A basic assumption underlying this perspective is that involving teachers in determining the direction of their own professional lives results in more coherent programs and a more academically focused environment. An analogous point can be made for local citizens. The more they are involved in the decisions that guide the schools their children attend, the more likely they will invest themselves in supporting schools.

SBDM strives to provide teachers with autonomy, which Lortie (1975) observes is a difficult status to achieve, without a reconfiguration of the power and authority relationships in a building (Purkey & Smith, 1983). Moreover, SBDM seeks to enfranchise the local citizenry as school partners (Goodlad, 1983).

In fact, the literature on parental choice is another contributing pressure to the reconceptualization of the role of decisionmaking in schools. In recent years, it is not uncommon to locate scholarly works on the influence of parental choice on the school building. For example, Coleman, Hoffer, and Kilgore (1982) discussed this phenomenon in relation to parochial schools, and Raywid (1990) and Coons and Sugarman (1978), among others, have argued rather articulately for the by-product of parental commitment to a school when parents are able to choose to send their children to a particular building. Again, school-based decisionmaking is seen as a way to bring parents into the culture of the school and have them work with teachers and administrators in choosing a direction for the school.

Regardless of the pressures and influences that have led to the attractiveness of SBDM, the essential attribute that makes it distinguishable is the notion that those who are closest to the action are given greater authority for making decisions. In the traditional paradigm, many decisions are made by others who are quite removed from the places where the decisions are implemented. Thus, SBDM can represent a fundamental shift in how schools operate.

Examples of School-Based Decisionmaking

Let's review how others are working to make school-based decisionmaking operational. This brief review is by no means exhaustive since the idea is spreading rapidly; new examples and interesting variations emerge each year.

One of the authors of this paper served as one of six members of a school council for an elementary school in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, during the 1984-85 school year. The purpose of the council was to give guidance to the building principal on issues of curriculum. During the first year of implementation, the school council was asked to follow the development of the family life curriculum and the introduction of computers into the classrooms, make recommendations to the principal and the faculty, and represent the thinking of other parents on these issues. This group, while called a school council, did not include teachers and was not responsible for allocating resources. The school council did not make decisions concerning how the principal should manage the school or interact with teachers. Furthermore, the school council was not asked to initiate new ideas for the curriculum. Rather the school councils in this community, in their formative stages, were asked

to react to new curricula coming either from the state department of education or the central administration of the school district. This example highlights how a relatively early attempt to involve parents in school decisions operated without direct connection to the activities of teachers and students.

Contrast the Cherry Hill example with the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990, where teachers, administrators, and parents are required to be partners on a school council. In Kentucky, a school council is expected to make decisions about the use of resources; the employment and assignment of staff, including selection of the principal; the assignment of students to classes and programs; and the design of a curriculum that best meets the learning needs of that school's students and the learning outcomes set by the state.

West Virginia has aggressively undertaken school-based decision-making. In regular and special sessions between 1988 and 1990, the legislature created four separate structures to foster local decisionmaking in schools.

Established at every elementary school are school curriculum teams, made up of the principal, counselor assigned to the school, and three K-4 teachers chosen by that faculty. Curriculum teams have great flexibility in detemining K-4 programming and methods. They also will be instrumental in implementing 1990 legislation requiring the state board of education to develop a three-year plan for the transition to a developmentally based program for kindergarten through fourth grade (Governor's Office, 1990).

Local school improvement councils are West Virginia's strategy for involving parents and community members in school decisionmaking. Established in the 1988 reform legislation and revised in the 1990 special session, councils are mandated for every school and have wide representation from the school and community. Members include the principal, three teachers, two school service personnel, three parents, two community representatives, and one student at schools housing seventh grade or higher. The councils must meet at least once each grading period and "shall receive cooperation from the schools in implementing policies and programs" encouraging parent and business involvement with the schools (Governor's Office, 1990).

School faculty are now central to the school decisionmaking process, since the 1990 creation of faculty senates. Established at each school and composed of all permanent, fulltime professional educators at a school, faculty senates meet monthly for a two-hour block of noninstructional time within the school day. In addition to making recommendations to the principal concerning the selection of new staff, the establishment of the master curriculum schedule, and the assignment of secretaries, aides, and paraprofessionals, faculty senates make decisions concerning the allocation of state-provided funds to each senate ($150 per professional educator in 1991). These funds are designated for the purchase of instructional materials, supplies, or equipment and are in addition to $50 provided for each teacher's or librarian's discretionary purchase of instructional materials. Faculty senates also elect the three teacher representatives to the local school improvement council.

Peer control of professional growth opportunities is possible through the final structure adopted in West Virginia--the district professional staff development council. Composed of proportional representation from the major school levels, from vocational and special education, and from other specialties in proportion to their employment in the district, members are nominated by their faculty senate and elected by secret ballot of all instructional personnel in the district. The councils enable teachers and administrators to plan and carry out staff development opportunities based on local needs. The legislative mandate directs that monies be made available by the local board of education to permit the council to fund its objectives.

Minnesota is another state that is building the concept of SBDM into its reform agenda. Under the Minnesota derivation, teachers, administrators, and parents make up the school council. In contrast to New Jersey and more consistent with Kentucky, school councils in Minnesota will have a broad scope for decisions. The members of the school councils in Minnesota are being asked to make decisions in a wide variety of areas, including the expenditure of building funds, curriculum, how the building is staffed, student assessment, and the development of the building's mission. Minnesota appears to be placing the governance and the management of the schools in the hands of the citizens who hold expectations for the schools, the teachers who teach in the building, and the administrator who manages the building on a day-to-day basis. It seems that in Minnesota and Kentucky, school councils have the potential to become a rather powerful force for initiating building-level policy.

As other districts attempt to decentralize power and authority via school-based decisionmaking, the structures vary according to local

interest. In Chicago, school councils are elected by the parents of children attending the school. The school council includes six parents, two teachers, two community members, and the principal. School councils in Chicago have the authority to hire and fire principals, develop school improvement plans, and spend money.

In Los Angeles, school councils are made up of anywhere from 6-16 parents, teachers, administrators, and classified staff. The school councils in Los Angeles have the authority to make decisions about teacher preparation, student discipline guidelines, exam schedules, spending state lottery proceeds, and the use of school equipment.

As these examples demonstrate, more than one model and more than one definition of scope of influence exist for SBDM. School councils in their best forms need to be designed and adapted to address the unique needs of the local school.

Another variation of SBDM comes from a study by Brown (1990) conducted in Edmonton in Alberta, Canada, and Cleveland, Ohio. The purpose of the study was to examine issues related to the implementation of SBDM. SBDM was defined as identifying the lowest possible organizational unit where the decision could be expected to be carried out. In most instances, that unit is the school. Using interviews, Brown and his colleagues tried to ascertain where concerns about the innovation of SBDM were highest. After interviewing 60 participants in SBDM, Brown draws the following observations, among many others:

- many general services are retained by central offices;
- schools under decentralization are better able to allocate resources and adjust procedures to meet students' needs;
- constraints external to the defined "site" inhibit flexibility of decentralized schools;

- initiative toward innovation is not a function of decentralization;
- principals see themselves as solely accountable for their schools;
- parents do not gain control of the school through the school council;
- teachers are mildly supportive of participation in SBDM; some do not want to participate in decisions about budget; and
- school-based decisionmaking increases flexibility, but decreases the amount of time available to the participants to pursue other activities.

The Brown study is perhaps the most detailed investigation of SBDM to date. Throughout the study, one can find vignettes and examples of problems any administrator or teacher trying to implement SBDM would encounter. As we gain experience, it will be helpful to study how others address implementation. In doing this, it is important to learn from experiences elsewhere. Note that Brown did part of his study in Canada. There are other international sources of information as well; for example, SBDM has been working in schools in the state of Victoria, Australia, for the past 10 years. A great deal of information and experience are available from these other settings to make the job easier for those who look and ask.

Other early studies of SBDM implementations are appearing now. For example, Malen and Ogawa (1988) have studied school councils in Salt Lake City. Their focus was on learning if decisionmaking relationships really changed. Their findings were that, although the site councils were authorized to be policymakers, principals and professionals controlled the partnership. They suggest that this condition is due to the traditional roles of principals and teachers, the need for better access

to information, the reluctance by parents to initiate, and the lack of district central office support and monitoring.

These findings are consistent with the observations of Jeff Northfield, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia. In a personal conversation with the authors, he reported his impressions both as a long-term school council member and researcher. In Victoria, parents can serve on the school councils as long as they have children in the school. Northfield observed such a steep learning curve for non-education members that they became informed and influential just at the time when their children were leaving the school, and they had to leave the council.

Two messages are reinforced by the Salt Lake City and Victoria, Australia, experiences: (1) developing a fully functioning school council takes times; and (2) ongoing external facilitation (i.e., structural support, staff development, coaching, and monitoring) is essential.

Another recent study examined the decentralization of dollars. Wohlstetter and Buffett (1991) interviewed administrators in five school districts and four states about their efforts to decentralize budgeting. Their analysis reflects the extreme range of possibilities and practice. They estimate that 20 percent of the school budget is centralized in the Chicago school system, while as much as 70 percent of the budget has been decentralized in Dade County. They conclude that new patterns of decisionmaking are giving building-level educators "substantial discretion over, at least, some resources." (p. 12)

The overall impression is that an expanding and diverse set of school-based decisionmaking initiatives are underway. The number of sites is expanding, the number of studies is increasing, and talk about the ideas is more frequent. The next area of attention will need to be on the details of implementation. Regardless of the number of exploratory efforts and research reports, each new site will need to address for itself how to accomplish this daring change.

SCHOOL-BASED DECISIONMAKING AND THE RESEARCH ON CHANGE

Momentarily, we will turn our attention to the relationship between SBDM and the dynamics of the change process. But first we want to overview why we think a relationship exists.

Among all of the recent attempts to reform schools, SBDM faces the greatest obstacle to overcoming the status quo. SBDM is not a curriculum to be implemented by teachers in individual classrooms. SBDM is not a process of instruction, or a change in the school calendar, or a directive to alter the ways in which students are grouped. SBDM requires neither a restructuring of the school nor a reforming of the school. Rather SBDM entails a "renorming" of the interpersonal interactions among the adults associated with the school, i.e., administrators, teachers, and citizens.

In essence, SBDM requires one of the most difficult types of change: it requires that the same people undertake different responsibilities. Few administrators have had opportunities to share their power and authority with others. Likewise, few teachers and parents have had formal opportunities to share responsibility for deciding the direction

of building-level policy (Barth, 1990). Nor have teachers had to adjust what they do in the classroom based on the results of a shared decision-making process. Under school-based decisionmaking, the same people who have been working in a building and those who send their children to a particular school are now being asked to share in making and implementing school decisions.

Our second reason for linking SBDM with research on change follows from the first. For most educators, SBDM is an innovation with which they have had little experience. In the instance of Kentucky, it is being imposed from outside the school, via legislation. In other cases, such as Sacramento and Miami, district leadership has pushed SBDM. We believe that if SBDM is viewed as a basic change in existing structures (i.e., an innovation), then there are findings from studies of other change efforts that can guide the development of strategies for implementing this innovation more smoothly. But before we can extend this conversation on implementation, we reemphasize one important point: change and the resultant implementation of an innovation is a process, not an event (Hall & Hord, 1987).

Research on change enjoys a rich 70-year history. Farmers and physicians have been studied as they adopted new practices (e.g., using hybrid corn seed or using penicillin in place of sulphur-based drugs). Studies in third-world countries have examined the transition from wooden to steel-tipped plows. Early studies in education included those of Mort (1953), who studied the spread of such educational innovations as kindergarten.

Currently, the research on change in schools has focused upon the implementation of various types of educational innovations, such as

effective schools, whole language, the writing process, cooperative learning, the various special education changes, and others. In addition, a number of studies have focused on what happens during the implementation process (Fullan, 1982) and how teachers perceive and deal with educational innovations (Hall & Hord, 1987). An additional area of focus has been the leadership role of the principal (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982) and the principal as change facilitator (Hall, Rutherford, Hord, & Huling-Austin, 1984).

This rich, interesting, and widely varied array of studies on change can be useful to practitioners and policymakers interested in implementation of SBDM. SBDM is an innovation. Persons involved in developing and implementing SBDM will go through predictable stages, phases, and experiences that have been observed with other educational innovations and in other social contexts. Universal concepts and principles about the change process can be considered and, in many instances, applied to the implementation of SBDM. We briefly review four major areas of research on change that have direct implications for and application to implementation of SBDM. These key themes are: (1) perceptions, (2) participant concerns, (3) principals, and (4) patterns of change.

Perceptions

One of the keys to success in the adoption of an innovation is the potential users' perceptions of the innovation. People have perceptions about any new innovation and its possible implications. These perceptions can be analyzed and classified in a number of ways. Leaders who are able to understand and categorize these perceptions can adjust their facilitation actions to be in sync with the perceptions of the

followers. When the linkage between perceptions and leader actions are complementary, the chances of implementation success are greater.

In an array of studies, rural sociologists and others have identified a set of perceived attributes of an innovation that are associated with whether or not an innovation is readily adopted. Whatever the prospective users (in this case, teachers and principals) interpret the innovation to be and how they feel about it are their perceptions. Five categories of perceived attributes have been summarized by Rogers and Shoemaker (1971):

- Relative Advantage
  If the innovation is perceived to have an advantage over the current practice, then it will be adopted more quickly.

- Compatibility
  An innovation that is perceived to match and fit with the current values of the adopter will be more quickly accepted.

- Complexity
  Innovations that are perceived to be complex are adopted more slowly, if at all, while those that are perceived as being simple are adopted more quickly.

- Triability
  If a component of an innovation can be sampled without having to adopt the entire innovation and use of that component is successful, then the total innovation will be more readily accepted.

- Observability
  If positive effects of use of the innovation can readily be seen, then the innovation will be adopted more quickly.

Again, the key in this set of attributes is perception. It is not necessarily what the innovation is in an absolute sense, rather it is how the potential adopter perceives the innovation. The leadership for the change effort needs to facilitate differently depending on peoples' perceptions of the innovation.

When this set of perceived attributes is thought about in relation to the innovation of SBDM, we can anticipate what the perceptions are likely to be and speculate about how these perceptions can affect the rate of adoption. For example, many administrators and teachers will not see a relative advantage with SBDM over existing decisionmaking processes. Instead, they may perceive a number of disadvantages, including a loss of principal authority and increased time for decisionmaking. SBDM does not appear to be compatible with current practices; routines and procedures for current decisionmaking are not consistent with SBDM. Also, SBDM is complex; it adds new duties, more responsibilities, and additional work for participants. SBDM could be tried in parts (e.g., decisionmaking in one area only); however, in statewide mandates there is frequently no time to test parts. Further, there are few sites where one can go to observe SBDM in operation and see its positive effects, although this may be changing rapidly.

As this quick sampling of one area of research on change illustrates, findings from research on implementation of other innovations can be instructive. Also, the models from research indicate a serious potential for implementation problems with SBDM. Whether or not these become real problems and whether they sustain themselves as problems depends upon the skills of all who are in a position to provide leadership and facilitate the implementation process. This responsibility includes a continuing role for policymakers as well as district office personnel, school-based staff, and community persons.

Participant Concerns

During the past 20 years, extensive research has documented the effects of the change process, and of implementation in particular, on adopters of innovations.

Extensive research on the concerns of teachers and others has been done using the conceptual framework known as the Concerns Based Adoption Model [CBAM] (Hall, Wallace & Dossett, 1973; Hall, George, & Rutherford, 1979; Hall & Hord, 1987). One of the key dimensions of this model is the concept of users' Stages of Concern about the innovation. As illustrated in Figure 2, Stages of Concern describes seven different types of concerns that adopters experience as they move through the change process.

Figure 2 **Typical Expressions of Concern About the Innovation**

	STAGES OF CONCERN	EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN
IMPACT	6 REFOCUSING	I HAVE SOME IDEAS ABOUT SOMETHING THAT WOULD WORK EVEN BETTER.
IMPACT	5 COLLABORATION	I AM CONCERNED ABOUT RELATING WHAT I AM DOING WITH WHAT OTHER INSTRUCTORS ARE DOING.
IMPACT	4 CONSEQUENCE	HOW IS MY USE AFFECTING KIDS?
TASK	3 MANAGEMENT	I SEEM TO BE SPENDING ALL MY TIME IN GETTING MATERIAL READY.
SELF	2 PERSONAL	HOW WILL USING IT AFFECT ME?
SELF	1 INFORMATIONAL	I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT IT.
	0 AWARENESS	I AM NOT CONCERNED ABOUT IT (THE INNOVATION)

Hall, G.E. & Rutherford, W.L. Concerns of teachers about implementing team teaching. Educational Leadership, December, 1976, 34(3), 227-233.

Hall, G.E. & Loucks, S.F. Teacher concerns as a basis for facilitating and personalizing staff development. Teachers College Record, September, 1978, 80(1), 36-53.

The Stages of Concern can be systematically measured (Hall, George, & Rutherford, 1979). Extensive research in most democratic countries has, in all cases, documented that these different concerns exist in the minds of teachers as they experience the change process.

Before implementation, concerns tend to be Unrelated (Stage 0, Awareness); any concerns present are about other things.

As possible use of the innovation becomes real in the minds of adopters, they have more intense Self concerns (Stage 1, Informational; and Stage 2, Personal). Their concerns focus on the implications of the innovation for them. For example, they ask: Am I capable of doing it? What will the principal say and do? What current practices will I have to give up?

As use of the innovation begins, Task concerns (Stage 3, Management) become more intense. People's thoughts, motivations, and preoccupations deal with concerns about the time, materials, and procedures it takes to use the innovation. Their concerns focus upon how to integrate the innovation with other parts of their daily work.

It is not until after the Self and Task concerns are resolved that adopters can begin to have more intense Impact concerns (Stage 4, Consequence; Stage 5, Collaboration; and Stage 6, Refocusing). For example, they ask: How will the use of this innovation affect students and the school as a whole? How will it improve my effectiveness? How can I work with other faculty to use this innovation?

In terms of SBDM, the Stages of Concerns phenomena are likely to affect teachers, principals, district office personnel, community members, and others whose work is touched by this innovation. For the

implementation process to be successful, these different Stages of Concern will need to be recognized, addressed, and resolved.

Keys to the resolution of concerns are ongoing support, formal training, staff development experiences, and coaching--essential staff development processes as outlined by Joyce and Showers (1980). Without ongoing staff development and other forms of assistance that address teachers', principals', and parent concerns, as they have them, implementation of SBDM in individual schools is likely to be fraught with problems.

Principals

Although principals experience their own Stages of Concern about the implementation of an innovation, they are called upon to address the concerns of faculty and others. A key to their effectiveness and success is how well they address the concerns of all and move all participants in a shared direction.

Research in the past 10 years has clearly documented that different principals approach the role of being a change facilitator in dramatically different ways. Extensive research in the United States, Australia, Belgium, and elsewhere documents that principals can be distinguished in terms of their leadership behavior as it relates to facilitating implementation of educational innovations. A clear and consistent pattern exists between teacher success in implementation and the "facilitator style" that the principal employs (Thomas, 1978; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982; Hall, Rutherford, Hord, & Huling-Austin, 1984; Schiller, 1988). The

brief descriptions of three different change facilitator styles--Initiator, Manager and Responder--are presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3 Descriptions of Three Change Facilitator Styles

Initiators have clear, decisive long-range policies and goals that transcend but include implementation of the current innovation. They tend to have very strong beliefs about what good schools and teaching should be like and work intensely to attain this vision. Decisions are made in relation to their goals for the school and in terms of what they believe to be best for students, which is based on current knowledge of classroom practice. Initiators have strong expectations for students, teachers and themselves. They convey and monitor these expectations through frequent contacts with teachers and clear explication of how the school is to operate and how teachers are to teach. When they feel it is in the best interest of their school particularly the students, Initiators will seek changes in district programs or policies or they will reinterpret them to suit the needs of the school. Initiators will be adamant but not unkind, they solicit input from staff and then decisions are made in terms of the goals of the school, even if some are ruffled by their directness and high expectations.

Managers represent a broader range of behaviors. They demonstrate both responsive behaviors in answer to situations or people and they also initiate actions in support of the change effort. The variations in their behavior seem to be linked to their rapport with teachers and central office staff as well as how well they understand and buy into a particular change effort. Managers work without fanfare to provide basic support to facilitate teachers' use of an innovation. They keep teachers informed about decisions and are sensitive to teacher needs. They will defend their teachers from what are perceived as excessive demands. When they learn that the central office wants something to happen in their school they then become very involved with their teachers in making it happen. Yet, they do not typically initiate attempts to move beyond the basics of what is imposed.

Responders place heavy emphasis on allowing teachers and others the opportunity to take the lead. They believe their primary role is to maintain a smooth running school by focusing on traditional administrative tasks, keeping teachers content and treating students well. They view teachers as strong professionals who are able to carry out their instructional role with little guidance. Responders emphasize the personal side of their relationships with teachers and others. Before they make decisions they often given everyone an opportunity to have input so as to weigh their feelings or to allow others to make the decision. A related characteristic is the tendency toward making decisions in terms of immediate circumstances rather than in terms of longer range instructional or school goals. This seems to be due in part to their desire to please others and in part to their more limited vision of how their school and staff should change in the future.

Hall, G.E., Rutherford, W.L., Hord, S.M., Huling, L.L (1984, February). Effects of three principal styles on school improvement, Educational Leadership, 41(5), 22-29.

Teachers are more successful (correlation r = .76) in schools where principals are facilitating change with the Initiator style. In schools with Manager-style leadership, teachers are still successful in implementation, however, not as successful as in schools with the Initiator style. Teachers in schools with principals who operate in the Responder style of leadership are not nearly as successful in implementing innovations.

One key implication from this research is that implementation success on the part of the teachers is directly related to the facilitator style of the principal. In addition, how the principal works with other facilitators inside and outside the school will make a major difference. One key that makes the difference for Initiator-style principals is their development of a shared vision that becomes the central theme around which all day-to-day actions and decisions accumulate. The same will be true with the implementation of SBDM.

In contrast to what the casual reader will think, SBDM will actually be more successful and more elaborate in the school with the stronger principal (i.e., Initiator change facilitator style). In the one study, Bridges (1990) closely followed three principals in a large urban school district that was supporting a move toward SBDM. Bridges' study focused upon one principal with the Responder style, one with the Manager style, and one with the Initiator style. The clear and consistent pattern observed in this study was that SBDM became more subtle, more complex, and more used in the school that had the Initiator-style principal. Interestingly, and in some ways ironically, Bridges observed that it was in the Initiator-style school that teachers were less interested in going through the routine requirements that were necessary to become an official

SBDM school. In this school, teachers felt they already were a part of the decisionmaking process and that the school was moving in appropriate directions.

In the Responder-led school, teachers were more interested in having a greater say in how the school was run. At the same time, the configuration of SBDM that resulted was less rich and less directed to outcomes for students.

Again, in the area of the principal's role in leadership and change, research findings have implications for the implementation of SBDM. SBDM will not end up being the same in each state, in each district, and certainly not in each school. Depending upon the staff, the facilitator style of the principal, and the perceptions and concerns of all, SBDM will take on a life of its own and will go through its own organic evolution. One clear implication of this set of predictions is that support for implementation of SBDM will require ongoing staff development and coaching by facilitators external to the site. Also, these predictions imply a need to develop ways to document and describe the different configurations of SBDM that can develop. Fortunately, we can turn to the change process literature for guidance in this area as well.

Patterns of Change

For at least 20 years now, researchers have documented and established that innovations are, as Rice and Rogers (1980) have suggested, "reinvented"; or, as it has been proposed in the Concerns Based Adoption Model, different "configurations" of an innovation can be observed in different schools and within different classrooms in the same school

(Hall & Loucks, 1981; Hall & Hord, 1987; Marsh, 1990; Marsh & Odden, 1991). To document these different operational forms, procedures have been developed to identify key components of an innovation and to identify the ways these components can vary (Hall & Loucks, 1978; Heck, Stiegelbauer, Hall, & Loucks, 1981). Thus, it is possible to go from classroom to classroom, or in the case of SBDM from school to school, and identify and describe the different configurations of an innovation.

A proposed Innovation Configuration Component Checklist for SBDM is offered here as Figure 4. Obviously, to establish a research-based version of this component checklist, fieldwork would need to be done on an array of sites where SBDM is being used.

One set of implications that emerges from the innovation configuration studies concerns determining what is and what is not recognized as appropriate. As illustrated in Figure 5, where one considers the innovation to be a "car," some forms of transportation that are depicted across the configuration continuum fail to represent a range within the category of car.

We have the same problem with SBDM. As illustrated earlier, different states, different forms of legislation, different school districts, and various individuals have their own mental images and definitions of SBDM. As schools become engaged in implementing it, we are going to discover that our own definitions are surprisingly limited and that the amount of variation in what schools actually create as SBDM will be extremely large. Yet each SBDM initiative carries with it an archetype of what SBDM really is.

Figure 4 Configuration Checklist - SBDM

Hall & Galluzzo, 1991

IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Staff Development

__ Initial training for Principal __ Initial training for Team __ On-going coaching

Context Support

__ Formal release of site from traditional policies and procedures
__ Active accomodation by School Board
__ District office personnel role shifts to accomodate and support SBDM
__ Installation of new parallel systems for evaluation and accountability

SBDM OPERATIONAL COMPONENTS AND VARIATIONS

Participants Solicited in Decisionmaking

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
Teachers, Parents, Business Aids, Custodians	Teachers Parents	Teachers Only	Community Only	Principal Only

Strategies to Support Teacher Participation

__ Team Teaching __ Part-time Teachers __ Volunteers
__ Instructional Aids __ Teaching in Teams __ Early Release Day

Participant Representation on School Council

__ Teachers __ Custodians __ Students __ Other Administrators
__ Parents __ Principal __ Instructional Aids

Decisionmaking Process

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
Consensus	Vote	Principal Decides	District Office Approves

Decision Sequence

__ Prework by Task Force
__ Committee Recommends to whole Faculty
__ Committee Decision Final
__ Committee Recommends to Principal
__ School Decisions Final
__ School Decisions have to be confirmed by District Office, or others

Decision Areas

Curriculum (Authority: -- Advise -- Set)

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
Selection of goals and objective	Selection of materials including Text	Selection of Delivery Approaches	Combination

Budget Topics (Authority: -- Advise -- Set)

__ Principal Salary
__ Lunchroom Personnel
__ Curriculum Material purchases
__ Supplies
__ Teachers Salary
__ Other _____

Staff Evaluations (Authority: -- Advise -- Set)

__ Principal __ Teachers __ Aids __ Other _____

Teacher Assignments/Scheduling

(a)	(b)	(c)
Decide	Advise	No role

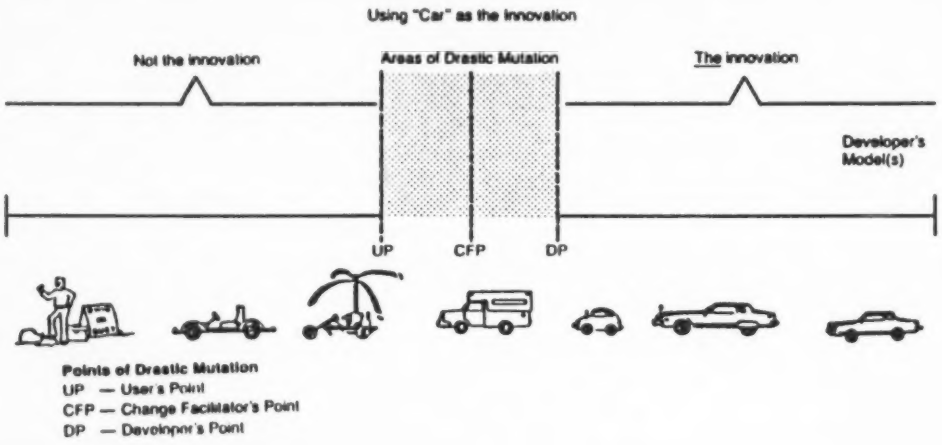
Hirings (Make the Decision/Advise)

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
All school Employees	Principal	Teachers	Classified Staff	No Say

Teacher Work Hours/Work Week

(a)	(b)	(c)
All	Non-Student Contact	Student Contact

Figure 5 **Configuration of a "Car"**



Hall, G.E. & Hord, S.M. (1984). Change in Schools: Facilitating the Process. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, pg. 138.

One of the serious problems of the past 20 years has been that hasty (after one or two years of implementation) conclusions have been made about innovations being "no good" or causing "no significant differences." If the innovation is never implemented, it is not surprising to find that the expected outcomes are not observed. In other instances, it has been clearly documented that the configurations of the innovations implemented were not consistent with what the original architects had imagined. However, a continuing pattern in schools and the school reform movement is a cycle of announcing great innovations, followed by short-term motivational support for implementation, and a lack of documentation of the configurations as implemented.

Policymakers, educational experts, and others continue to create innovations. Fuzzy conceptions of each are rapidly spread across the

country. Most of these creators have a nearly explicit expectation that, of course, all school teachers and principals will do exactly as imagined. Yet, on the implementation side of the equation, making someone else's dream an operational reality in one school or classroom is not easy. Typically, the creators of the innovation do not provide adequate descriptions of how to make this thing work. Thus, teachers and administrators are left to their own devices. Many of their creations may work well in their settings, but not match with the implicit images of the creators. The consequence is another round of no-significant-difference reports, increasing frustration on the part of the creators and the implementors, and the cry for a new cycle of reform.

This vicious cycle of reform creation without reform implementation must be broken. The innovation of SBDM represents a good place to start the break. If we are really serious about supporting and improving schools, then let's turn loose the participants at the local level to do the improving--that is much the philosophy of SBDM. This time, let's explore alternate configurations of SBDM and document implementation. Let's recognize the necessities for implementation success: time, support, patience, coaching, and technical knowledge. With these concepts applied, SBDM can be a useful way of guiding schools into the 21st Century.

IMPLICATIONS

This paper has lightly skipped across a number of images, ideas, and concepts related to one education innovation--school-based decisionmaking. No one idea has been thoroughly developed; instead, our intent has been to

skim the surface with the expectation that each reader will construct his/her own interpretations.

The SBDM movement, however, holds implications for each of its players. If SBDM is going to be successfully implemented in local schools, continuing responsibilities exist for policymakers, as well as for people at the local site. In addition, the role of the district office personnel and the related roles of intermediate units and institutions of higher education must be altered. For SBDM to work, all of these actors must understand the differences between development and implementation, recognize that change is a process, and be willing to do their part in facilitating movement towards implementation of real school-based decisionmaking activities.

SBDM currently raises more questions than it offers answers (Conley, Schmidle, & Shedd, 1988). Few studies have been conducted to identify the effectiveness of school councils, the perceptions of the participants, or the quality and scope of the decisions that school councils make. Our lack of knowledge ranges from the structural to the conceptual. We do not know the ideal number of members or representative groups that should compose a school council. We do not know how often the school council should meet. Little data are available on the nature of decisions that school councils make. At this point, no clear body of research literature examines the purpose of school councils. In some literature, the purpose seems to be decentralization; in other writings, the purpose of the school council is to empower one or more groups, e.g., teachers, parents, and citizens, among others. What we can speak to, however, are the issues that typically confront anyone who attempts to implement a complex innovation in schools.

Time

One of the first realizations of those who have already implemented SBDM is that it takes time, and that time comes in two forms. As the research on the change process suggests, it takes three to five years for real change to occur. It is unrealistic to expect that the structures and processes will fall into place smoothly. All too often we expect innovations to be in place in a very short time span. As schools move toward significant alteration of their traditional systems of governance and management, the local school council will struggle to identify its role and function; early decisionmaking attempts may be slow and awkward. The second aspect of time relates to routinely scheduling SBDM activities into participants' work day. Some teachers will be expected to serve as teacher representatives on the school council. They will need assistance in scheduling SBDM work while continuing their regular teaching. Indications from previous research suggest that educators struggle with fitting these new responsibilities into their already busy lives (Brown, 1990). Without adequate time, the work of school councils may take on a thin veil of participation and effectiveness (Firestone & Corbett, 1988).

Staff Development

The second implication from our knowledge of SBDM and change draws as much from the foregoing implication as it does from the literature. Simply, educators for whom SBDM responsibilities are new will need support and assistance in learning how to perform their new tasks. SBDM activities will take time and energy away from teaching. Maintaining a balance between new roles and old roles will be a challenge for many educators.

For the implementation of SBDM to be successful, it will require additional resources devoted to helping both educators and local citizens become comfortable with their new roles and responsibilities (Murphy, 1990). Otherwise, we could arrive at a place where "more people are happier with dumber decisions" (Schlechty, 1990). Of particular importance will be the challenge of helping teachers, administrators, and parents or community representatives learn the skills of collaborative decisionmaking. Most teachers and administrators are quite accustomed to making decisions in isolation of one another. Typically, teachers make decisions within their classrooms, and administrators make decisions about the school or district organization, in large part, by themselves. In restructured schools, and especially those who integrate SBDM into their routines, the skills of collaboration and shared decisionmaking must be nurtured.

In summary, most innovations in education need to be accompanied by detailed planning; investing in preparing participants for new roles will be one form of preparation (Brown, 1990). For example, Everson (1986) describes a planning and implementation model in which a school council of nine members experienced four days of training on the types of decisions school councils make and on how to make decisions collaboratively.

It would be ideal if one result of an extensive planning effort was delineation of the roles and responsibilities of school council members--teachers, administrators, citizens, parents, and students. The types of decisions they will be asked to make are important too. Conley and Bacharach (1990) boldly ask, "Who will make what types of decisions in school-site management?" (p. 543). They discuss how the scope of and responsibility for decisions "are at the heart of the tension" between the

traditional values that guide schooling, and the creation of a more professional environment. All of this contributes toward a professional ethos in the building. Planners need to consider who will make decisions and who will hold others responsible for action on them.

Start Small

The evidence from the literature on the adoption of innovations suggests that successful implementation is accompanied by a careful, ongoing analysis of early trials. That is, many innovators start small rather than make wholesale changes. We think it inadvisable to jump into an innovation heretofore foreign to the organization of schools. Rather, it is more advisable to review the configuration checklist we proposed in Figure 4, analyze the needs of the organization, and proceed to adopt and adapt selected SBDM processes that are related to identified local needs. With this approach, it will be much easier to maintain ongoing assessments of the progress made as the school council learns during its initial growth stages and to add additional components.

Support for Change

Contrary to the implication of the phrase school-based decisionmaking, schools cannot implement and operate SBDM in isolation. No school by itself would have, internally, all of the skills, capacities, and resources to institutionalize SBDM. Further, no school is an island. Outsiders can help by changing their traditional roles. District office personnel, school board members, and state policymakers will need to give up certain decisions, learn to tolerate school-based decisions, and be willing to accept diverse decisions from school to school.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, we would like to express our enthusiasm for the intent and spirit ingrained in the SBDM idea. We also want to caution against the typical expectations for change, i.e., that SBDM will be the ultimate panacea of the so-called school reform movement. SBDM can go into the scrap heap of educational innovations along with IGE, OD, PSI, etc., unless policymakers, district-level persons, and school-based personnel recognize that implementation is a process that requires extra resources, time, dollars, staff development, and outside facilitating support. Finally, SBDM is meant to give authority to school personnel, but the only way that can happen is if school district and state policy people act in ways that empower schools. Otherwise, we continue as crabs in the bucket; as one almost makes it out in the struggle to improve, others pull the first back down in their quest to climb to new heights.

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